



SAFETY ALERT 08-01

17th Coast Guard District
United States Coast Guard
P. O. Box 25517
Juneau, Alaska 99802
907-463-2810 or 800-478-7369 In Alaska
www.uscg.mil/d17/m/CFVS.shtml

CALL FOR A FREE DOCKSIDE EXAM

MSO Anchorage	271-6700	MSD Sitka	966-5454
MSO Valdez	835-7223	MSD Ketchikan	225-4496
MSO Juneau	463-2450	MSD Kodiak	486-5918
MSD Dutch Harbor	581-3466	MSD Kenai	283-3292

FISHING VESSEL TAKES ON WATER AND SINKS IN THE BERING SEA, **4 RESCUED**

Background: The Seventeenth Coast Guard District Safety Alert program provides “Lessons Learned” from marine casualties in support of the Coast Guard’s “Ready for Sea” safety program.

Incident: The weather reports didn't look good so the master decided to quit fishing a day early and head in with his catch. The master had just finished greasing the shaft and then checked all the spaces to be sure everything was as it should be. He then went to take over the helm so to crew could get some rest. About 20 minutes later he felt a thump and the boat shook. He thought he probably hit something so he checked out the lazarette and the hold but both were dry. Suddenly the high water alarm sounded and he ran back to the wheelhouse. He checked the alarm board, saw the engine room light and quickly ran to the engine room. When he opened the door he discovered water was pouring into the space from shaft alley. He woke his crew and then started his heavy-duty 6" dewatering pump. The water was coming in so fast the pump wasn't able to keep up. Although he couldn't see anything, he checked the valves under water but felt nothing wrong. The crew pulled out their immersion suits which were labeled with each crewmembers name. Several calls were made to the Coast Guard updating the situation. The Coast Guard quickly launched a C130 from Kodiak and alerted other mariners to the situation through an Urgent Marine Information Broadcast. The vessel was settling straight down and when water was coming in through the scuppers, the master made the decision to abandon the vessel. The crew manually launched the life raft, tying it off to the vessel and donned their survival suits in preparation for abandoning the vessel. They activated the EPIRB, then got into the life raft taking the EPIRB and a medical kit with them. The master made one final call to the Coast Guard alerting them they were abandoning ship and in what position. As the vessel took on a port list they cut the life raft painter line and waited while the vessel sank lower into the water and eventually sank bow down. Nearly two hours after the first mayday call was made, another fishing vessel located the life raft and all four crewmembers were safely transferred from the life raft.

Lessons Learned: Although the cause of the casualty remains under investigation, there are “Ready for Sea” safety factors that are relevant to this incident and several “lessons learned”.

1. Monitor the weather when you are out on the water. The master cut his fishing trip short because he didn't want to be caught in a major storm. Fortunately, when the incident occurred, the weather was fairly moderate allowing the crew to quickly and safely abandon ship and making the rescue operation safer as well.
2. Conduct drills as if they are an actual emergency and include all crewmembers. Don and work in immersion suits, mark the immersion suits with the name of the individual who will wear it, and simulate manually launching the life raft and the EPIRB. The crew on this vessel knew how to don their immersion suits. Their names were on the suits so they knew immediately which one fit. They knew how to manually launch the life raft. They launched it and safely tied off to the vessel so they wouldn't lose it. They knew how to activate the EPIRB and realized the importance of taking it with them in the life raft.
3. Install an alarm panel in the wheelhouse. When an alarm is activated it is readily apparent which alarm is sounding. The space can then be checked, and de-watering pumps started if necessary and repairs effected to contain the flooding. The alarm panel on this vessel had just been installed and it enabled the master to quickly determine the area that was flooding and alert his crew to the emergency.
4. Carry a hand held VHF radio and have it readily accessible if you need to abandon the vessel. Once the crew abandoned their vessel they had no way to communicate verbally with the rescue assets.
5. This vessel operator was conscientious and took safety seriously. Safety equipment had recently been replaced and the vessel was "Ready for Sea".